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TO AMEMBASSY ZAGREB PRIORITY 9825

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 018819

SIPDIS

SIPDIS - ZAGREB FOR BELGRADE

THE FOLLOWING CARACAS 000233 DTD 22FEB08 SENT ACTION
SECSTATE INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE WESTERN
HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POST BELGRADE MOSCOW TBILISI
AIT TAIPEI USNATO HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI USOSCE VEINNA
NSC REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION 25FEB08

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000233

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HQSSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPT PASS TO AID/OTI RPORTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2032
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNMIK](#) [VE](#) [KV](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: NO SURPRISE, CHAVEZ BACKS RUSSIA AGAINST KOSOVO
INDEPENDENCE

REF: A. STATE 16319
[1](#)B. STATE 13716

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT RICHARD DOWNES
FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

(C) Venezuelan President Chavez often deliberately takes positions in the international fora contrary to those taken by the United States, such as with his outreach and support of Iran, and has been currying favor with Russia, which has become Venezuela's major arms supplier. The Embassy was therefore not surprised on February 21 when President Chavez said the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) opposed recognition of Kosovo. In a lengthy speech that all domestic radio and television broadcasters were required to carry, Chavez said that Kosovo's independence was part of a "plan by the Empire" (the United States) to "weaken the governments of the world", a development that he saw as "fundamentally dangerous" to the peace of nations. President Chavez said he was with Russia and China in this position and as well as with Spain. He accused European countries who have recognized Kosovo's independence of subordinating their interests to the United States. Chavez implied that should Russia recognize the independence of breakaway regimes in Georgia or other former parts of the Soviet Union, the BRV might very well follow suit. While President Chavez' often accuses the United States of fomenting a non-existent separatist movement in the Western oil rich and opposition lead state of Zulia, Venezuela faces no domestic separatist challenges.

DUDDY

UNQUOTE: RICE